

[Hattie Zellars]

[???

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

DATE September 27, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

1. Name and address of informant Hattie Zellars, West Lincoln
2. Date and time of interview Sept. 27, 1 to 4:20 p.m.
3. Place of interview Home of Mrs. Zellars, Lincoln, Nebraska
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant Woodrow Weedberg, West Lincoln, Nebraska
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

Long, narrow room, serves for living, dining and kitchen. Fairly well furnished, piano, book case filled, stoves, tables, etc. Somewhat crowded. House is just a garage, unlined and built of old lumber, crude architecture, more or less a temporary abode. Surroundings rural, and very plain, weedy growth. Roads improved. West Lincoln is just a hamlet, population about 250, but was at one time a thriving town of about 2,000 people. [???

FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

Library of Congress

DATE September 27, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mrs. Hattie Zellars, West Lincoln, Nebraska

1. Ancestry German-American
2. Place and date of birth Solsbury, Indiana, Sept. 27, 1867
3. Family Father & mother from Tenn. Informant has 2 children living
4. Places lived in, with dates Solsburg, Ind., 1867 to 1884 W. Lincoln, Nebr., 1884 to date
5. Education, with dates Country school - Indiana, 1874 to 1884
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates Chairman of Red Cross (local) knitting and sewing 1880 to date. during World War. House-work, spin and [card?] wool, 1810 to 1884 General farm home work, 1880 to date.
7. Special skills and interests knitting, sewing, spinning, cooking and homework
8. Community and religious activities Helping neighbors, caring for children, Christian and Methodist, sewing bees and society
9. Description of informant Well preserved, farm woman type, good talker, pleasing personality, average physical build, suntanned complexion.
10. Other points gained in interview Mrs. Zellars owns 110 acre farm near West Lincoln, by airport. She is moving back to it in the spring. Has raised several grandchildren, experienced some hardship and enjoyed life as she went along. Likes the idea of co-operating to give the new generation some education based on their own ancestral background, of earlier life and customs.

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FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St. City

DATE September 27, 1938 SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Mrs. Hazel Zellars, West Lincoln, Nebr.

We came to West Lincoln from Solebury, Indiana about 1884. There was only two or three buildings here then. The main one was the Western Hotel. We got off the train at the old Union Pacific Union depot in Lincoln, January 1, 1884.

This is my birthday today. I am 71 years old. I saw West Lincoln grow from a few buildings into a town of 1500 or 2000 people. There was 2 packing houses, 2 brick yards, a vinegar works, soap works, canning factory, bakery, shoe store, 3 grocery stores, four hotels, one of which, the Western, belonged to the B and M railroad. But most of this industry petered out in time.

My mother was from North Carolina near Raleigh. Father lived in Mulberry Gap, Tennessee until he was 15 years old. They wanted to leave there so 20 families got together and started out. For their health, some of them stopped awhile in Kent, Kentucky, and then came on to Indiana. Mother came from North Carolina to Indiana by ox team when she was one year old. That was the year the stars fell. They were camping under a big oak tree that night when the stars began to fall and they all prayed. Some of them said if those big balls of fire drop on us we'll all be gone. They huddled close together there under the tree. My mother was born August 20, 1832 and was only a year or so old when this happened.

Father and mother were married in Indiana. They stood under a big "Rambo" / apple tree so all the relatives could see them. At that time they didn't get a marriage license.

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The preacher would read an order. Years after that we asked father how he proposed to mother. He claimed that he just said to her, "Well, do you want to get married?"

They used to say, 'marry in red, live in dread; marry in blue, your marriage is true.'

No girl ever wore black for a wedding dress. The new married couples did not go away on honey moons as they do now. Sometimes they had a wedding dance. But marriage was considered a very [?] serious, [solemn?] occasion.

My father and mother were members of the Christian or Campbellite church. I remember an old saying about this branch of the church: 'Woe to the Israelites Woe to the Campbellites!

And then someone added, Woe to the electric lights!

When I was a girl, folks always pitched in and helped one another. When someone got ready to build a log house, the neighbors would get together and have what they called a "log rolling". The women would accompany the men folks to the place all dressed up in calice and they would get up a big dinner and while the men put up the logs the women would knit and sew.

When anyone died in the neighborhood they would always call my mother to go and help make the shroud. They depended on the neighbors to fix up the corpses, because there were no undertakers. The older people who died always were placed in black coffins or boxes. Everything was black. The relatives of the dead were black crepe on their arms and hats and the women wore black veils for a time after the funeral. There more no hearses and usually the coffin was hauled in a spring wagon. Sometimes part of the funeral procession was people afoot. I remember when they put baking soda on the face and hands of the corpse, so the skin would not turn. I have done that myself.

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We heard lots about grave robbing in these days. They would steal bodies for medical schools.

I always the enjoyed the old days when my mother used to card and spin wool. She had an old spinning wheel. We raised sheep and a good many would die. After a time we could pull the wool off their bodies easily by hand. After the wool was [?] washed and carded we would take a 'roach' or corn shuck and start spinning on the finger, then we would wrap the 'roach' around the spindle. My mother wove bedspreads; I have what is left of one yet. It is a sort of 'mother' color; a sort of pink.

I liked to cook. We used to eat lots of cabbage, baked beans, potatoes and sweet potatoes and some meat, mostly pork.

I have often told the children the reason we older people are healthy is because we ate lots of vegetables, spinach, beans, etc. My grandchildren won't eat vegetables like we did.

When we got sick, we would try our home remedies and if they didn't work, we would try to get a doctor. For the ague we took 'cincinda'. Verbine root was used for rheumatism. Some used to carry or wear different herbs to keep off sickness but Father didn't believe it would work.

He didn't believe in ghosts but one time at night he came in with his horse rig and called to us to bring a lantern. He seemed scared and said the horse suddenly jumped ahead and then stopped and trembled. He looked around and saw a man who got out of sight real quick. He didn't know the man and thought that he was something unnatural as the horses acted so queer.

People used to go miles to hear that tell at meetings about visiting with the dead. Lots of people still believe in it.

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My sister rented a house in Illinois and after she moved in she heard noises in the walls. She thought it was haunted and her son made her move out.

The young people didn't have much privacy when they courted. The boys would come and sit in the room where the whole family was gathered about. Folks more very strict about having the young folks well attended. Sunday was the big day for courting.

I have an old newspaper clipping from Macon, Missouri about a man by the name of Robertson, who took an oath in 1908 that he wouldnt shave or cut his hair until [?]. J. Bryan was elected president. He kept his vow and when he died his hair and whiskers reached almost to his waist.

Our neighbor used to say, 'It's going to rain, I can fell it in my bones'; 'I cussed him till the flys wouldn't light on him.' Form D - Supplementary

Mrs. Zellar is evidently not of the superstitious kind and did not believe in signs to any extent. She has good expression and when warmed up to conversation will use quite a few terms which would be interesting to record. Later she may recall other items and expressions and if possible will visit with her again.